



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 22



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), KJV=King James Version (1611), NKJV=New King James Version (1982), NAB=New American Bible (1995), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

AN EXPLANATION OF THE VISION IS GIVEN, #1

7:15 I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. 17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. 19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; 20 And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. 21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. ^{KJV}
(Dan 7:15-21)

INTRODUCTION

In the first year of Belshazzar's reign, when the dignitaries of Babylon had apparently forgotten Daniel (5:11), **God remembered him**. The Lord does not forget His own, but His eye is ever upon them. As it is written, "*The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry*" (Psa 34:15).

This Divine posture, however, is

not only to protect the saints and provide for them. **The favor of God moves Him to unveil His purposes to men, and give them understanding concerning His covenants and determinations.** Those whose lives are wrapped up in the here-and-now, by that very condition, forfeit unspeakable insights from heaven. The Lord has a heart to make Himself and His will

known to men. As it is written, "*The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and He will show them His covenant*" (Psa 25:14).

In this section of the book, the Lord is unveiling His "*secret*" to Daniel. He is showing the prophet aspects of the "*covenant*" centered in Christ that precious few souls have ever been given to see.

OUTLINE

- ▶ THE IMPACT OF THE VISION UPON DANIEL (7:15)
- ▶ DANIEL ASKS FOR TRUTH (7:16a)
- ▶ DANIEL IS GIVEN THAT FOR WHICH HE ASKS (7:16b)
- ▶ THE IDENTITY AND ORIGIN OF THE BEASTS (7:17)
- ▶ A GLIMPSE OF THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER (7:18)
- ▶ THE DISTURBING PART OF THE VISION (7:19-20)
- ▶ A TEMPORARY TRIUMPH (7:21)

LIVING IN THE WRONG PLACE

This is a marvelous principle of God's dealings with men, and we do well to extend ourselves to apprehend it. **When men focus on the temporal aspects of life, they are forced to live in a domain in which manna from heaven does not fall.**

The basic rudiments of life can become a distraction to men. Jesus spoke of these things in this way. *"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"* (Mat 6:25). There are less fortunate people in this world for whom these things are not sure from day to day. For them, these concerns can be distractions, causing the soul to be unaware of *"spiritual blessings in heavenly places"* (Eph 1:3).

Others, who have no inordinate care for the basic necessities of life are distracted by other matters. Of these things Jesus said, *"the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful"* (Mark 4:19).

Still others have been distracted by erroneous religious emphases that have robbed the soul – the *"traditions of men."* Although these traditions are most demanding, they bring nothing of substance to the soul. Jesus said to those perpetrating such traditions, *"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in"* (Mat 23:13).

Because these things turn men's attention away from God, they also deprive them of the benefits of His great love. The contemporary church could improve upon its grasp of these things.

Daniel will be shown great mysteries because of his closeness to the Lord. He is special to the Lord, like the *"apple of His eye"* (Deut 32:10). Thrice Daniel is told he is *"greatly beloved"* in the heavenly realms. Some versions use the expression *"highly esteemed,"*^{NASB/NIV} *"much beloved,"*^{Septuagint} *"specially chosen,"*^{NJB} *"God loves you very much,"*^{NLT} and *"you are precious."*^{TNK}

- ▣ *" . . . for thou art greatly beloved"* (9:23).
- ▣ *"And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved . . ."* (Dan 10:11)
- ▣ *" . . . And said, O man greatly beloved . . ."* (Dan 10:19)

Now, because of this circumstance, the Lord opens things to Daniel that will occur long after his time. **It is as though the Lord's heart will not let him hide from Daniel what He is going to do.** A similar condition existed when the Lord was about to destroy Sodom. Although the destruction could not be averted, He was compelled to reveal to Abraham what He was about to do. As it is written, *"And the LORD said, Shall I*

hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" (Gen 18:17-18).

I encourage you to extend yourself to be pleasing to the Lord. Do not think this is not possible, for the Spirit admonishes you to do so.

- ▣ *"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children"* (Eph 5:1).
- ▣ *"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God"* (Col 1:10).
- ▣ *"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more"* (1 Thess 4:1).

We are told that God draws near to those who draw near to Him. Things that stand between us and God are to be eliminated from our lives. **"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded"** (James 4:8). **Souls experience spiritual poverty simply because of their distance from the Lord, and their distraction by lesser things.** This is particularly unacceptable in Christ because the way to God has been opened (Heb 10:20), sin taken away (John 1:29), and everything pertaining to life and godliness supplied (2 Pet 1:3).

REVELATION IN ISOLATION

There is something else to be seen here that is of great value to the believer. **Those who are in a state of isolation, or cut off from the benefits of the**

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Being greatly beloved of God, Daniel is shown some remarkable things about these visions, by Given O. Blakely

companionship of many believers, can receive wonderful things from God. Daniel is away from Judah, and has been for many decades. He is cut off from Jerusalem, the city of God. The normalities of Jewish life have not been enjoyed by him for many years. Yet, his love for and grasp of the truth has not deteriorated. God will make known most remarkable things to this man **while he is in Babylon** – while he is a one of the “*captives of Judah*” (2:25). A strange land, a heathen government, and opposition by foes cannot stop the flow of revelation to him. **He is still precious to God, even when in a foreign land.**

This is a principle that is

Spirit ceased to strive with decadent humanity. Yet, God unveiled to him what He was going to do, and spared Noah in the fulfilling of that word. *“And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish My covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons’ wives with thee”* (Gen 6:17-18).

▣ **Abraham.** This man’s father was an idolater (Josh 24:2), and he lived in a time when there was no known

day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God” (Ezek 1:1).

▣ **Paul.** During the ultimate experience of isolation, which is the time associated with death, this man was wafted into a lofty realm and given to see things no man had ever before seen. *“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter”* (2 Cor 12:2-4).

▣ **John.** In an unusual experience of isolation, John was on the Isle of Patmos because he proclaimed the Word of the Lord. On that piece of rock jutting out into the Aegean Sea, Jesus appeared to Him, giving him a revelation for the churches, and a remarkable insight into things to come. *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia . . . Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter”* (Rev 1:10-11,19).

Why Say These Things?

I make these observations because of the times in which we live. **There is a sense in which those who put their trust in God are presently in a state of isolation.** While there are other believers around us, they are the vast minority of the people. Those who have any measurable degree of an understanding of God and His great salvation are even more rare. And, those committed to maintain that understanding are exceedingly rare. If ever there was a time when Christ’s words, *“few there be that find it”* (Matt 7:14), were appropriate, it is today. Those who *“sigh and cry”* because of these conditions (Ezek 9:4) require the

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frequently seen in Scripture. Men who stood relatively alone were vouchsafed special insights from the God of heaven. The evil environment in which they found themselves did no hinder these revelations.

▣ **Enoch.** This man lived during the rapid decline of morality that led to the flood. In that time, he was given to prophesy of the coming of the flood, which prophecy was also a depiction of the coming of the Lord. *“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him”* (Jude 1:14-15).

▣ **Noah.** This man lived in the time when God’s patience ran out, and His

prophet and no Scripture. Yet, God called him (Gen 12:1-3), and made a covenant with him. *“And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. . . As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee”* (Gen 17:3-5).

▣ **Moses.** Living in a time of unusually sparse revelation, and isolated from Egypt in a wilderness, God called Moses (Ex 3:3-8), through him led Israel out of Egypt (Isa 63:11), and became intimate with him. *“And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face . . . He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel”* (Ex. 33:11; Psa 103:7).

▣ **Ezekiel.** While this man was an exile in Babylon, he had visions of God. *“Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth*

comfort that is found in the record of Daniel's faithfulness, experiences, and blessed stewardship of the truth.

This circumstance has produced at least two unfortunate results. **First**, it has brought such a level of discouragement to some, that they have withdrawn from the good fight of faith, thinking the whole effort is pointless. **Second**, others have been moved by the situation to align themselves with dead religion, thinking that some involvement is better than none. As a consequence, their souls are being starved, and they live in a constant state of spiritual frustration.

However, the book of Daniel can prove to be a great encouragement to us in this matter. It is possible in our time to have an unusual and productive fellowship with the Lord. **It is possible to receive sustaining insights that invigorate the soul, stabilize the mind, and satisfy the heart.** But they

IT IS POSSIBLE TO RECEIVE SUSTAINING INSIGHTS THAT INVIGORATE THE SOUL, STABILIZE THE MIND, AND SATISFY THE HEART. BUT THEY WILL NOT BE FOUND IN BABYLON'S COURT

will not be found in Babylon's court, so to speak. There is a sense in which we must withdraw ourselves from "*vain tradition*," for until we do, what we receive from God will be sparse, if, indeed, anything at all is received. God will always reward faith, but that faith can neither be developed or sustained apart from fellowship with God.

This is a time when believers are to "*awake out of sleep*," knowing the time (Rom 13:11). **It is a time to shake the dust of lifeless religion from us** (Isa 52:2), **and put on the beautiful**

garments of salvation (Isa 52:1). God is still looking for people whose hearts are perfect toward him – people to whom He can entrust marvelous insights, and whose cause He can undergird (2 Chron 16:9). **There is no reason why that person cannot be you!**

The salvation of God will fully equip you to live in an wicked age, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly "*in this present world*" (Tit 2:12). That is a most blessed circumstance!

THE IMPACT OF THE VISION ON DANIEL

7:15 I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me."

There is a certain religious climate that is developed by an academic approach to the Word of God. That climate has robbed many a soul of having sensitive responses to the Word of the Lord. By "sensitive responses," I mean reactions to the revelation of God such as those Daniel experiences in this text. That involve very strong reactions.

Approaching the Word of God from the standpoint of human wisdom and analysis has opened the door for all manner of harmful initiatives. Some of them include the following.

- ▣ **Questioning the validity of Scripture** – a practice popularized by "higher criticism." Such people are fond of using terms like "best and oldest manuscripts," "in the original language it says," etc. It is not unusual for such people to be more impressed with an archeological find than a Divine affirmation.
- ▣ **Placing a greater weight** upon word tenses and sentence structure than upon Divine affirmation and the message the words carry.
- ▣ **A tendency to fit Scripture** into preconceived theologies and views that have been adopted independently

of the Scriptures themselves.

- ▣ **The inclination to imagine** that earthly learning and worldly wisdom give people the advantage in the understanding of Scripture – which approach leaves no place for faith.
- ▣ **The disposition to leave** a deeper understanding of Scripture to the theological "experts," and those with more advanced learning in language and historical technicalities.
- ▣ **There is a marked propensity** in those approaching Scripture in this manner to not take it as seriously as they should. Such can read of momentous judgments, for example, with little impact upon their spirits. They can be exposed to exceeding great and precious promises, yet take them casually, failing to engage in a fervent quest to obtain them.

Now, all of these may appear quite incidental to the naive, but they are not. **Such frames of mind actually**

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disqualify a person from receiving spiritual understanding. They do so because there is no place for faith in them, or trust in the Living God.

Let no one imagine for a moment that this places a premium upon ignorance, or makes the acquisition of knowledge wrong or unlawful. Daniel himself was a learned man in both language and literature (Dan 1:4). However, those were not the resources upon which he **relied** when it came to understanding what God had revealed. **His worldly learning was his slave, not his master. It was subordinate to his faith, which is the highest form of understanding.**

This circumstance is what produced the tender experience of which we now read. It is essential that we understand these are the reactions of faith, not of a hypersensitive man.

The Sureness of the Vision

Daniel senses the sureness of the vision, and that perception is what produces the experiences to which we are now exposed. They have come from understanding, not fear. They have been produced by faith, not flesh.

Not Speculative or Philosophical

Daniel's reaction has not been produced by his own speculations of what the vision might mean. Nor, indeed, has he philosophized upon it, therefore agitating his own spirit. The point of the vision has registered upon his understanding, even though he does not yet know all of its details. **Those who remain casual when exposed to great revelations have simply not perceived the point of them.** It is their ignorance that has produced their spiritual stupor.

The Spirit and Body Distinguished

The dialog that follows confirms there is a radical distinction between the human spirit and the body of flesh in which it resides. While the body has a rather large variety of sensibilities, and the ability to be affected in a variety of ways, the spirit is even more versatile. It can have deeper and more profound reactions than the body, even affecting the condition of the body.

GRIEVED IN MY SPIRIT

"I Daniel was grieved in my spirit . . ." Other versions read, *"my spirit was distressed,"*^{NASB} *"was troubled in spirit,"*^{NIV} *"my spirit within me was anxious,"*^{RSV} *"my spirit was pained because of this,"*^{BBE} *"was affrighted at these things,"*^{DOUAY} *"my spirit in my body trembled,"*^{Septuagint} *"was deeply disturbed,"*^{NJB} and *"pierced hath been my spirit."*^{YLT}

☐ **Paul** also testified to the impact of things upon his spirit. *"Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach*

"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). That is, the "understanding" God gives is intended for, and registers upon, the human spirit.

Three Levels of Impaction

Men can be impacted, or experience reactions, on three different levels: in the body, in the soul, and in the spirit. **The measure of a persons relationship with God can be discerned by how deeply truth affects him.**

FOR THIS REASON, THERE IS A CERTAIN DANGER IN EMBRACING A SOULISH RELIGION THAT ROOTS IN THE LESS PROFOUND PART OF MAN. IN MY JUDGMENT, MUCH OF THE RELIGION OF OUR DAY IS SOULISH IN NATURE.

Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother" (2 Cor 2:13-14). He also spoke of his "spirit" being "refreshed" (1 Cor 16:18). Once, when he saw a city given over to idolatry, his "spirit was stirred in him" (Acts 17:16).

☐ **Job** spoke of the "anguish of my spirit" (Job 7:11), and testified that his spirit was "troubled" (Job 21:4).

☐ **David** said his spirit was "overwhelmed" (Psa 77:3; 142:3; 143:4).

☐ **Ezekiel** spoke of the "heat of my spirit" (Ezek 3:14).

☐ **Mary**, the mother of our Lord, said "my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior" (Lk 1:47).

There is a deeper part of man – deeper than the soul, and more profound than the body. **It is the part that is more in the image of God, and that can be more profoundly impacted by what He makes known.** Young Elihu, whose words God confirmed, wisely said,

The body. Some people's religion never goes deeper than the body. Their supposed spiritual experiences are all in the body, or flesh. It is most revealing to hear people speak of how they have been blessed by God. Too often, their experiences are confined to the body. While it is true that our bodies can be affected by exposure to God and the things of God, that affectation is by no means superior.

The soul. The soul of a person can have deeper and more profound experiences than the body. However, the soul is more closely aligned with the body than with the spirit, and vacillates between good and evil. Emotion is more prominent in the soul, which must often be exhorted to come up higher (Psa 42:5,11;43:5). For this reason, there is a certain danger in embracing a *soulish* religion that roots in the less profound part of man. In my judgment, much of the religion of our day is *soulish* in nature. It does have an impact upon people – one that is deeper than mere bodily sensation. However, it does not go deep enough to have a lasting and thorough impact upon the individual.

The spirit. Here is the most

profound part of man. The Divine imagery is most precisely found here. When we are born again and receive the Holy Spirit of God, He testifies to **our spirit** that we are the children of God. As it is written, *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”* (Rom 8:16). If our religion does not reach into this part of our persons, it is all in vain and pointless. If we have difficulty deciphering which part of our complicated makeup is our spirit, the Word of God can more precisely define it for us. *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the **dividing asunder***

represented by the *“little horn.”* It confirmed to Daniel that this was something that had been noted in heaven, and against which particular Divine judgment had been determined. This kingdom would, in a very real sense, endeavor to overthrow God’s kingdom. While such an effort is, from one point of view, foolish, it is also of such gravity as will not be overlooked by the *“Lord of kings.”* Even though earthly initiatives against the God of heaven, His truth, and His people, are vain, they are of the greatest gravity.

Daniel senses something of the

visions in my mind kept alarming me,”
NASB *“disturbed me,”* NIV *“terrified me,”*
NRSV *“made me afraid.”* GNV

Daniel was a rare soul – one who could be so deeply affected by what God revealed to him! The injection of evil and wickedness into the world troubled him. He could not dismiss it with a wave of the hand, affirming that whatever will be will be! Some souls without such sensitivity hear of the great evils that are in the world and glibly reply, “Well, God said these things would happen, and therefore we should not be alarmed.” Such individuals are more closely related to the fatalist than to the God of heaven. **Daniel was not such a person!**

THIS DISTINCTION IS NOT AN ACADEMIC DEFINITION. IT IS ONE THAT REGISTERS UPON THE UNDERSTANDING THROUGH FAITH. THE INDIVIDUAL IS THUS ENABLED TO TAKE HOLD OF THE TRUTH, AND WALK IN THE SPIRIT WITH CONFIDENCE AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING.

The Lord made known coming evens to Daniel personally, and he was *“troubled.”* **This is the troubling of faith, not unbelief.** It is an alarm caused by the personal abhorrence of evil and the contemplation that it would become prominent. It is the sort of impact the revelation had upon John when he was given to see the rise of the false church: *“I was greatly astonished”* NIV (Rev 17:6).

of soul and spirit . . .” (Heb 4:12).

This distinction is not an academic definition. It is one that registers upon the understanding through faith. The individual is thus enabled to take hold of the truth, and walk in the Spirit with confidence and spiritual understanding.

Now, Daniel has been exposed to a vision of great magnitude and profound meaning. He has seen beastly and destructive governments rise in the earth. Within one of those governments – the fourth one – a kingdom and king of a different sort surfaced. It was of such an order as caused the vision to shift to the heavenly throne, and the Judge of all. The impact of that kingdom, represented by a *“little horn”* that spoke boastfully, required the consideration of one *“like unto the Son of man,”* who would receive a kingdom that would never be destroyed.

All of this accented the significance of the king and kingdom

magnitude of all of this, and his spirit within him is grieved, vexed, troubled, and distressed because of it.

GRIEVED IN THE MIDST OF MY BODY

“ . . . in the midst of my body . . . ”

Other versions read, *“within my body,”* NKJV *“within me,”* NASB and *“in the midst of the sheath.”* YLT The last translation – *“in the midst of the sheath”* – is of particular interest. The *“sheath,”* in this case, is the body. The *“spirit”* is like a living sword that is within that sheath.

Thus, the reaction of Daniel to the vision goes deeper than a mere fleshly sensation or emotional impact. *“In the midst of my body”* indicates Daniel’s impression was closer to his *“inner man”* than the *“outward man.”* It was spiritual, not carnal, and had more to do with perception than raw emotion.

TROUBLING VISIONS

“ . . . and the visions of my head troubled me.” Other versions read, *“the*

Such sensitive souls are precious in the sight of the Lord, for they have a *“contrite and humble spirit,”* able to be affected by the revelations of God (Isa 57:15). These are souls who can be entrusted with great revelations that would crush others, and even repel some. **There are poor souls who cannot receive any word from God that speaks of doom, judgment, or the rise of iniquity.** It is too much for them to bear, for their view of God is too small. Others, like Daniel, can be shown such things with profit. While they do agitate the spirit and cause trouble, yet such people will seek a greater understanding.

One further observation. The things of God are conducive to great sobriety. Those who are granted insights into the truth of God, regardless of the level of those insights, do not take them lightly. In some respects, they are disturbing to our human constitution, producing an acute awareness of the greatness of God and the magnificence of His wisdom and ways. **A person who approaches the truth with a casual**

and merely academic spirit is a person who has not seen anything significant. Without exception, such

souls have, at the very best, a stunted and unproductive view of the God of heaven and what He is doing. Vast bodies of

refreshing and essential realities are hidden from them. I know of no exception to this rule.

DANIEL ASKS FOR TRUTH

“ 16a I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this.”

Troubling truth drives timorous and disinterested souls away, for they care not to inquire into things that are disturbing. They suppose by ignoring them, they will find relief. As the world puts it, “What you do not know cannot hurt you.” However, those who traffic in the truth of God, handling the Word of God with care and concern, do not have such reactions. **They want to know things that at first seem beyond their grasp.** They have a heart to know matters for fully that initially trouble and disturb them.

This is involved in buying, or appropriating the truth at all cost. As Solomon wisely counseled, *“Buy the truth and sell it not”* (Prov 23:23). Such efforts are described in the admonition, *“apply thine heart to understanding”* (Prov 2:2). The aggressiveness attending such application is painted most vividly in these words: *“Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God”* (Prov 2:3-5).

Isaiah spoke of engaging in an effort to obtain what God freely gives *“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price”* (Isa 55:1).

The Lord Jesus said, *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened”* (Mat 7:8).

Many souls remain in a state of spiritual ignorance because they have never engaged in a fervent quest to comprehend what God has revealed. The sophist may imagine that something revealed does not have to be sought – that the revealing of it equates to obtaining and comprehending the matter. However, consider the text before us.

I CAME NEAR

“I came near . . .” This is the posture of valid inquiry – coming near! In matters pertaining to God, distance is forbidden, and dwelling in the furthest areas causes fear to dominate. As it is written, *“They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings*

A RELIGION THAT ALLOWS PEOPLE TO REMAIN AT A DISTANCE FROM THE LORD WHILE MAINTAINING IDENTITY WITH HIM IS FALSE TO THE CORE. DISTANCE IS THE PRELUDE TO SPIRITUAL DEATH, AND IS ON THE BROAD ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION.

Something has been revealed to Daniel, a man *“greatly beloved”* by God. The revelation has been extensive, and Daniel’s thoughts upon it have been prolonged as well. Yet, the matter is not clear to him. He desires to probe into these things further, sensing there is more to be seen than he presently comprehends.

Thus, he engages in an initiative to appropriate further understanding. The very fact that he engages in such a pursuit confirms he understands **the Lord delights to unveil His secret to those who fear Him, and even show them His covenant** (Psa 25:14). **God has a desire to make Himself known!**

This facet of our Lord has reached its apex in Christ Jesus, and still many remain ignorant of it. Wherever this is known, souls will have a hearty appetite for the things of God, engaging themselves in a fervent quest for the truth, for which they have received a compelling love (2 Thess 2:10).

of the morning and evening to rejoice” (Psa 65:8). A religion that allows people to remain at a distance from the Lord while maintaining identity with Him is false to the core. **Distance is the prelude to spiritual death, and is on the broad road that leads to destruction.**

It is a principle in Divine relationships that **insights and acceptance are granted from the posture of nearness.** Thus we are admonished, *“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith . . .”* (Heb 10:22). And again, *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”* (Heb 4:16). It is said of the New Covenant, *“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God”* (Heb 7:19). It is no wonder that the Psalmist exclaimed, *“But it is good for me to draw near to God”* (Psa 73:28). And James the brother of our Lord wrote, *“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you”* (James 4:8).

Thus Daniel comes close to the Source of the revelation, pressing in to acquire a greater understanding of what he has seen in visions. His interest has been kindled, his spirit distressed, and his head troubled. But he does not shake his head in despair, or grieve because of his inadequacies. Instead, he comes near!

ONE OF THEM THAT STOOD BY

“... unto one of them that stood by . . .” And who is this “one” who was standing by? It is not the Ancient of days Himself, nor is it the Son of man. Instead, it is one of the multitudes that are

environments. Believing and loving the truth enables – yea, compels – a soul to press into holy realms in a quest for the truth.

We also learn from this event that **heavenly beings have more insight.** They are closer to the Lord, and thus know more of His inscrutable workings. While they do “*desire*” to look into the marvelous Gospel of the grace of God (1 Pet 1:12), they are not lacking in their knowledge of many of His wonderful works. Those who have received extensive explanations from angels include Jacob

inquire for further insights. What he had, though it far excelled ordinary gifts, was not enough to decipher the vision.

He is not satisfied with a fragment of the truth, but wants, as it were, the whole loaf. **Souls who are content to see only the periphery of truth are depriving themselves of needful resources, and will soon find such fragmentary knowledge is wholly inadequate.**

One of the curses of contemporary religion is that it leaves the people content with minuscule spiritual understanding. They are not compelled by the messages they are hearing, and the positions they are embracing, to draw near to the Lord, and press into the most holy place. They are coming short of taking the kingdom by violence (Matt 11:12).

Daniel drew near to one of these angelic hosts, just like John did when he went to an angel and said, “*Give me the little book*” (Rev 10:9). **His heart made him eager. His faith made him bold.**

And what is it that Daniel sought with such eagerness and boldness? He wanted to know “*the exact meaning*”^{NASB} of all that he had seen – the “*true meaning*,”^{NIV} together with “*the certainty*”^{DARBY} of it all.

He knew that those closer to the heavenly throne have a greater understanding of the determinations issuing from that throne. This is a kingdom principle that will greatly aid us in the acquisition of spiritual knowledge.

Those who are learned in the ways of the world, or have obtained recognized worldly credentials, will find they are of no value in matters pertaining to God **unless, by faith they are close to Him.**

WE ALSO LEARN FROM THIS EVENT THAT HEAVENLY BEINGS HAVE MORE INSIGHT. THEY ARE CLOSER TO THE LORD, AND THUS KNOW MORE OF HIS INSCRUTABLE WORKINGS. WHILE THEY DO “DESIRE” TO LOOK INTO THE MARVELOUS GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD (1 PET 1:12), THEY ARE NOT LACKING IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF MANY OF HIS WONDERFUL WORKS.

ministering to the Ancient of days (v 10). **What boldness it took to approach that holy concourse of ministering spirits!** The sight of a single angel has struck fear into the hearts of some. Thus message-bearing angels often told the recipients of those messages, “*Fear not*” (Gen 21:17; Matt 1:20; 28:5; Lk 1:13,30; 2:10). When Manoah and his wife, the parents of Samson, saw an angel, Manoah concluded, “*We will surely die*” (Judges 13:22). When a holy angel addressed John the beloved on Patmos, John said of the occasion, “*I fell at his feet to worship him*” (Rev 19:10), which worship the angel refused. Yet, Daniel now comes near this amalgamation of celestial spirits, and dares to make a request of one of them.

We learn from this that **a love for the truth brings with it boldness to enter otherwise fearful**

(Gen 31:11-13), Hagar (Gen 16:9-12), Balaam (Gen 22:32-35), Zechariah (Zech 1:9-17; 4:4-14; 6:4-7), Zacharias (Lk 1:13-20), Mary (Lk 1:30-37), the shepherds (Lk 2:10-12), and John (Rev 7:13-17; 17:7-18).

I ASKED HIM FOR THE TRUTH

“... and asked him the truth of all this.” Other versions read, “*began asking him the exact meaning of all this*,”^{NASB} “*asked him the true meaning of all this*,”^{NIV} “*questioning him about what all this was*,”^{BEBE} and “*sought to learn of him the truth of all these things*.”^{Septuagint}

The prophet senses that more has been made known to him than he presently discerns. The significance of this is seen when we consider what a singular prophet this man was. He excelled in all manner of wisdom, was an expert in language, and had understanding of dreams. **Yet in this matter he had to**

DANIEL IS GIVEN THAT FOR WHICH HE ASKS

“^{16b} *So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.*”

We will find there is a certain congeniality in the heavenly realms. **Those who come by faith into these**

lofty environs will find hospitable spirits and a cordial atmosphere. If this was true in the time of Daniel, before

Being greatly beloved of God, Daniel is shown some remarkable things about these visions, by Given O. Blakely

the removal of sins and the reconciliation of the world, you can only imagine the extent of friendliness and the willingness to grant understanding for those who now come in the name of Jesus!

HE TOLD ME

“So he told me . . . ” The candidness of the words are refreshing: “So he told me.” Other versions read, read, “So he said he would disclose to me . . . ” ^{NRSV} “And he said to me that he would make clear to me,” ^{BBE} and “he told me the truth.” ^{Septuagint} Thus Daniel sought and found. He asked and received. He knocked and it was opened. He took advantage of the knowledge of one standing close to him, and found there was a readiness to grant what he requested.

A Principle

It is in order to say a word here about taking advantage of available knowledge. This is a particularly sensitive point with the Lord. Jesus indicted the Jews of His day in these scathing words: “And ye **will not come to me, that ye might have life**” (John 5:40). He also upbraided an entire generation for not engaging in a quest to obtain knowledge that was readily available to them. “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: **for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here**” (Mat 12:42).

When Jesus was among us, one of the primary differences between His disciples and the multitudes was that **they inquired further into the truth**, asking Him to explain significant things to them. Such words as “*Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field*” (Matt 13:36), and “*Declare unto us this parable*” (Matt 15:15), signify the manner in which truth is obtained. Who can forget their

frequent inquiries like, “*Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?*” (Mk 9:11), “*Master, when shall these things be?*” (Lk 21:7), and “*Why could not we cast him out?*” (Mk 9:28).

O the blessedness of an inquiring spirit! Throughout the ages, such souls have been few and far between. But it does not need to be this way! No

1:45). The multitudes extended themselves to go to Jesus, even coming out of the cities and running on foot to get to Him (Mk 6:33-34). When Paul was being held in Rome, they appointed him a day when he could declare the Word of God. It is written, “*there came many to him into his lodging*” (Acts 28:23).

This has always been a hallmark

EVERY PERSON IS RESPONSIBLE TO OBTAIN THE UNDERSTANDING AND INSIGHTS THAT GOD MAKES AVAILABLE TO THEM.

persons who extend themselves to know the truth of God will be disappointed!

Every person is responsible to obtain the understanding and insights that God makes available to them. The Lord held the Gentile world accountable for **not** receiving the limited, yet consistent, testimony of creation. He also held the Jews responsible for **not** getting the message of Moses and the Prophets.

Today, because of the nature of institutionalism, a great deal of stress is placed upon being on the initiative to take the truth to the people. And, indeed, such an emphasis is certainly in order, for the Lord Jesus directed us to do this (Matt 10:7; Mark 16:15; Lk 24:47; Acts 16:10).

However, let it be clear that there are areas where God has planted men and women who have a grasp of the truth. **It is the responsibility of those who know of this circumstance to avail themselves of that truth.** The people went out to hear John the Baptist (Mk

of people who want to know the truth of God. Daniel is such a man, and thus he engages in an effort to appropriate more than he had already received – and he had received much.

HE MADE ME KNOW

“ . . . and made me know the interpretation of the things.” Other versions read, “*gave me the interpretation of these things,*” ^{NIV} “*instructed me,*” ^{DOUAY} “*he revealed to me what these things meant,*” ^{NJB} “*He explained it to me,*” ^{NLT} and “*caused me to know.*” ^{YLT}

The angel did not hesitate to share the truth with Daniel. It is almost as though he was waiting for him to make an inquiry. Because the angel resided in the realm from which the vision came, he had understanding that Daniel did not have. Yet, he was willing to share it, for that is the manner of those who perceive the truth of God. **The heavenly economy is one that is shared among the interested.** It is personal, but not private, individual but not exclusively so.

THE IDENTITY AND ORIGIN OF THE BEASTS

“¹⁷ These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.”

Thus far we have learned considerable about these four kings and kingdoms.

▣ First, we were introduced to them as a single statute comprised of various metals. Beginning with the golden

head, the kingdoms degenerated in value, going from gold to silver to brass to iron to iron mixed with clay. This value was both moral and spiritual and revealed a moral decline that allowed for each succeeding kingdom to become more ruthless and less discerning (Dan 2:32-33).

- ▶ These kingdoms were not simultaneous, but succeeded one another. They began with Nebchadnezzar and Babylon, and continued successively through Rome (2:38-41).

- ▶ All four of these kingdoms were produced under Divine influences, pictured as *“the winds of heaven”* striving upon the sea of humanity (7:2).
- ▶ Whereas the second chapter described their value, the seventh chapter describes their character.
- ▶ The four kingdoms came out of the agitated sea, each one different from the other, and succeeding each another (7:3).

- ▶ The *“little horn”* displaced three of the other horns, filling up the space they had occupied (7:8).

What Is Being Declared?

Daniel is being shown the world in its most refined and influential state – global governments. Here is worldly power brought to its vertex. **If men are in any way capable of resisting God, or superimposing their will upon His, they will be able to do it in government – which is a God-ordained power** (Rom 13:1).

- ▶ The Lord will show us that **all human wisdom, power, and initiative, is vain**. It has the curse of Adam upon it, and was never intended to be permanent. God uses government, but government can never use God. The God of heaven employs governments for the fulfillment of His purpose, but governments may never use God for the fulfillment of their objectives.

IN THIS ENCOUNTER WE LEARN THAT SATAN IS MORE APT TO WORK IN THE ENVIRONMENT OF GOVERNMENT, WHERE MEN MORE EASILY FALL PREY TO HIS DEVICES. THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH AND EYE, AS WELL AS THE PRIDE OF LIFE, ARE MORE SUBTLE IN THAT REALM BECAUSE OF THE DAZZLE OF ITS TEMPORAL GLORY.

- ▶ We are also being shown that **every time men unite apart from the unifying effects of faith, they eventually come against God**. If men are not motivated by faith, unity among themselves drives them even further from God. Just as they did at Babel, they make their plans without God in mind, and seek to promote their own name. This is why the unity of the sons of God is so unique. It is *“the unity of the faith”* (Eph 4:13) and *“the unity of the Spirit”* (Eph 4:3). All other unity, regardless of its refinement, seeming consistency, or longevity, is destined to destruction.

- ▶ The kingdoms tended more and more to be divided. Babylon was represented by a single golden head, the Medo-Persians by arms of silver, the Grecian by brass belly and thighs, and the Roman by legs, and feet with ten toes (2:38-43).
- ▶ All of these kings were temporal (2:35).
- ▶ God would set up a kingdom during the times of these kings – during the time of the fourth kingdom in particular (2:45a).
- ▶ The fourth kingdom is given a more precise and extended definition than the others (2:40-44).
- ▶ The kingdom of God would decimate all of them (2:45b).
- ▶ The displacement of the kingdoms was the result of a Divine initiative, as seen in the Babylonian kingdom being given to the Medes and Persians (5:28).

- ▶ They were radically different from each another (7:3).
- ▶ They all had beastly natures, as compared to the gracious nature of the God of heaven (7:4-7).
- ▶ Each succeeding kingdom tended to be more ruthless than the previous one, with the fourth kingdom being the most brutal of all (7:4-7).
- ▶ Again, more attention is given to the fourth kingdom, as in the second chapter (7:7-8).
- ▶ The fourth kingdom is said to have been different from all before it (7:7).
- ▶ Ten horns were upon the head of this fourth beast (7:7).
- ▶ From among these ten horns arose another *“little horn”* with unique characteristics that caught the attention of the prophet. It had the eyes of a man, and a mouth that erupted in boastful speaking (7:8).

- ▶ **Nothing of the world will be salvaged** – it will all pass away, its fashion and everything associated with it (1 Cor 7:31; 1 John 2:17).

- ▶ Although *“the kingdoms of this world”* are not independent from God, who is the Governor among them (Psa 22:28), they are under the allocated authority of the devil himself. Satan once showed Jesus *“all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him,*

Being greatly beloved of God, Daniel is shown some remarkable things about these visions, by Given O. Blakely

All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Mat 4:9). Jesus refused, resisting his temptation, and appealing to the God who ruled over Satan, and alone is to be worshiped. In this encounter we learn that **Satan is more apt to work in the environment of government, where men more easily fall prey to his devices.** The lusts of the flesh and eye, as well as the pride of life, are more subtle in that realm because of the dazzle of its temporal glory.

Now the angel will elaborate on the kingdoms to which we have been introduced.

GREAT BEASTS

"These great beasts, which are four . . ." When we first saw these beasts, they were also called *"great beasts"*(7:3). The word *"great"* not only means huge in size, but **dominating in nature.** The idea is that they were extensive, ruthless, and able to crush their opponents.

FOUR KINGS

"are four kings . . ." In our first exposure to these global kingdoms, they were also called both *"kingdoms"* and *"kings"* *"these kings"* and *"all these kingdoms"* (2:44). Now they are again referred to *"four kings."* In verse twenty-three of this chapter, they will also be referred to as *"kingdoms."* Viewed as *"kings,"* these beasts refer to certain rulers, given authority by God to do their own will among the sons of men. Viewed as *"kingdoms,"* they are seen as the result

THEIR GREATNESS CANNOT BE EFFECTIVELY CONTESTED BY MEN, NOR CAN THEY BE OVERTHROWN THROUGH HUMAN STRENGTH ALONE. THEY CANNOT BE DISPLACED UNLESS GOD HIMSELF REMOVES THEM.

of the king's dominion – empires that reflected his will and were ruled by him.

These are not four simultaneous kings, but represent four distinct rulers and their dominions. **Their greatness cannot be effectively contested by men, nor can they be overthrown through human strength alone.** They cannot be displaced unless God Himself removes them. They are, indeed, *"great beasts."*

OUT OF THE EARTH

" . . . which shall arise out of the earth." The vision itself portrayed the beasts as coming *"up from the sea."* Now the angel explains the vision by saying it means they arose *"from the earth."* It is the earth, or the people upon it, that are like a turbulent and restless sea. To be even more specific, *"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked"* (Isa 57:20-21).

There is a kingdom that is *"the kingdom of heaven"* – a phrase used exclusively by Matthew (Matt 3:2; 4:17;

5:3,10,19,20; 7:21; 8:11; 10:7; 11:11,12; 13:11,24,31,33, 44,45,47,52; 16:19; 18:1,3,4,23; 19:14,23;20:1; 22:2; 23:13; 25:1,14). This is the same as *"the kingdom of God,"* which emphasizes the head of the kingdom. *"Heaven"* puts the accent upon its headquarters, or the realm from which it is governed. **All other kingdoms, particularly the four under consideration, are "out of the earth."**

"The earth," in the sense of our text, is more than the physical environ in which we live. Rather, it is **the cursed realm upon which our affections are NOT to be placed** (Cool 3:2). The parts of our person that are *"upon the earth,"* are to be *"mortified"* (Col 3:5). This is the realm from which these kingdoms surfaced – **the domain upon which our minds are not to be placed** (Phil 3:19). Those who are in Christ Jesus have an even more precise view of the earth than Daniel. That is not owing to any moral or spiritual inferiority in this man of God. Rather, it is because of the time in which he lived – a time when sin had not yet been *"put away"* (Heb 9:26).

A GLIMPSE OF THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER

"¹⁸ But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."

Once again, the Divine manner is seen. Our vision is not permitted to linger long upon earthly powers. Quickly, before proceeding further, a word about the saints of God is given. This does not refer to angels, as some suppose, for they have not been destined to take the kingdom. As

it is written, *"For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak"* (Heb 2:5). It is man that was *"set over the works"* of God's hands, not angels (Heb 2:7). Presently, it is a *"Man,"* the *"Man Christ Jesus"* who is administering the Kingdom, a rule in which the saints will eventually fully participate (Heb 2:8-9).

Notice the way this vision is unfolding to Daniel. First he sees the rise

of four beasts, ruthless and dominating. Then he is given to see "the Ancient of days," God the Father. Then he beholds celestial hosts surrounding His throne and ministering to Him, carrying out His determinations. Following that He is given to see one *"like unto the Son of man"* – the glorified Christ. He sees the Kingdom being given to Him upon his return to heaven from the conquest of battle. Now his attention is turned to those who have been reconciled to God

through the atoning death of Christ – *“the saints of the most High.”*

It should be obvious to you where the Spirit is putting the emphasis. It is NOT upon the beasts. It is **not** upon kings. It is **not** upon kingdoms. It is **not** upon the *“little horn.”* Rather, the greater stress is placed upon God, His Son, and the saints. The angels knows this, and we do well to know it as well. **We are not to allow any one to cause our attention to rest upon those who are governed by God**, impressive though they may be. The burden of our consideration is to be placed upon the Lord and the execution of His will.

BUT

“But . . . ” This is a Divine disjunctive – a word that signifies **an over-ruling of adverse**

wife and take her for his own. Consequently, he instructed her to say she was his sister, which, indeed, she was, for they had the same father (Gen 20:12). Abimelech did take Sarah for his own. However, then is when God intervened. It is written, **“BUT GOD came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man’s wife”** (Gen 20:3).

▣ When Laban dealt treacherously with Jacob, it seemed as though he had the upper hand. However, God intervened. *“And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; **BUT GOD** suffered him not to hurt me”* (Gen 31:7).

▣ When Joseph’s brothers dealt

▣ When the Messiah came, the people condemned Him, delivering Him into the hands of Pilate. He was, according to the Word of the Lord slain by the hands of wicked men. But then God intervened. *“And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulcher. **BUT GOD** raised him from the dead”* (Acts 13:29-30).

▣ When sin entered into the world, and death by sin, a cloud of hopelessness hovered over the entirety of the race. It was then that God intervened. *“**BUT GOD** commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom 5:8).

▣ The description of mankind apart from Christ was staggering. They were *“dead in trespasses and sins,”* dominated by the devil, and were *“by nature the children of wrath.”* It was then that God intervened. *“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. **BUT GOD**, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)”* (Eph 2:3-5).

▣ Ponder our state before God moved toward us. *“For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another”* (Titus 3:3). Such a condition was condemned by God, and that without any equivocation whatsoever. However, then God intervened. **“BUT WHEN THE KINDNESS AND THE LOVE OF GOD OF SAVIOR TOWARD MAN APPEARED, But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”** ^{NKJV}

WE ARE NOT TO ALLOW ANY ONE TO CAUSE OUR ATTENTION TO REST UPON THOSE WHO ARE GOVERNED BY GOD, IMPRESSIVE THOUGH THEY MAY BE. THE BURDEN OF OUR CONSIDERATION IS TO BE PLACED UPON THE LORD AND THE EXECUTION OF HIS WILL.

circumstances. This is done primarily with Divine wisdom, although power is integral to the intervention as well. This overthrow is contrary to human reasoning, and is utterly impossible from a human point of view. The idea is as follows. **Even though beastly governments rose in power and domination, and even though they were ruthless and appeared to be invincible, yet the will of the Lord was wrought, and not their own.**

This kind of reasoning is found repeatedly in Scripture. It forms one of the pillars of spiritual thought, and provokes faith and hope in those who receive it.

▣ When Abraham was traveling through Philistine territory, he feared that Abimelech, king of the Philistines, would see his beautiful

hatefully with him, it seemed as though they had the advantage. Yet several years later Joseph testified that God was in the matter. *“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; **BUT GOD** meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive”* (Gen 50:20).

▣ When Samson slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, his strength became dissipated, and he was perishing for thirst. The situation was hopeless until God intervened. *“**BUT GOD** clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water there out; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day”* (Judges 15:19).

(Titus 3:5).

With the injection of this single word – **“BUT”** – the whole picture is changed. Suddenly the *“four great beasts”* do not appear as *“great”* as they did before. We are not only taken behind the scenes, but a Divine determination is revealed to us. It is so certain that it is unveiled and declared just as though it had already taken place.

THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH

“ . . . the saints of the most High. ”

As I have already mentioned, this phrase does **not** refer to angels, for they have not been slated to have the ultimate dominion (Heb 2:5-10). The promise of having things subjected to them was not given to angels (Heb 2:5). Further, in redemption, Jesus did not assume identity with the angels, but with the seed of Abraham (Heb 2:16). His present reign is as *“the Son of man,”* in which He is a pledge of the dominion of His brethren (Heb 2:6, 9-11).

I do understand that this passage is the subject of some controversy. Some, attempting to use word definitions, define *“saints of the most High”* as a term for Deity. Others say it refers to lofty heavenly beings, such as the holy angels. It is true that the word *“saints”* is sometimes used of angels (Deut 33:2; Job 15:15). But the vast majority of texts using this word is referring to *“the saints that are in the earth”* (Psa 16:3).

These are people who are holy and dedicated to the Lord. They have been made holy by virtue of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. While Abraham and the patriarchs were holy, their holiness was vastly inferior to that which is experienced in Christ Jesus. This was not owing to any deficiency in their character, but was rather due to the times in which they lived. Until Christ they did not have *“the fulness of the blessing”* (Rom 15:29), and thus were *“not made perfect apart from us”*^{NKJV} (Heb 11:10). They are included in the term *“the saints of the most High,”* but are here viewed in their capacity **after** Jesus appeared to put away sin, and was consequently exalted to the right hand of God.

The Most High

In, Scripture God is referred to as

“the most High” forty-one times. The first reference is found in Genesis 14:18, where Melchizedek is said to have been *“the priest of the most high God.”* Hebrews 7:1 also refers to this text. The book of Daniel mentions *“the most High”* thirteen times (3:26; 4:17,24,25,32,34; 5:18,21; 7:18,22,25,27).

The expression **“most High”** emphasizes God as the Source of all power. No one has ever given Him power in any sense or to any degree. Further, every personality that possesses power, whether in heaven, the earth, or under the earth, has been given that power by God. *“There is no power but of God”* (Rom 13:1), and that is particularly true

something that really did not belong to them. Their authority, impressive though it appeared, was delegated and temporary. *“The kingdom”* is really intended for the saints, not the beasts!

The Spirit repeatedly holds this fact out to the saints, ensuring them of the glorious destiny that has been determined for them. The following affirmations speak of the time when the saints will *“take,”* or *“receive,”* the kingdom.

- ▣ *“For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, **they shall inherit the earth**”* (Psa 37:9).
- ▣ *“Instead of thy fathers shall be thy*

THE SAINTS “TAKE” THE KINGDOM BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THEM – LIKE CANAAN WAS GIVEN TO ISRAEL. THE FACT THAT THEY TAKE THE KINGDOM MEANS THE BEASTS TEMPORARILY POSSESSED SOMETHING THAT REALLY DID NOT BELONG TO THEM.

in regard to kingdoms. The psalmist emphasizes how significant this is. *“God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that **power belongeth unto God**”* (Psa 62:11). Jesus taught us to pray, *“Thine is the kingdom, **and the power**”* (Matt 6:13). God is, in every sense, *“the most High!”*

Thus, *“the saints of the most High”* are those who are aligned with the God of heaven. They are in His favor because of the Son of man.

TAKE THE KINGDOM

“ . . . shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom . . . ” Other versions read *“shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom,”*^{NKJV} *“will be given the kingdom, and they will rule.”*^{NLT}

The saints *“take”* the kingdom because it has been given to them – like Canaan was given to Israel. **The fact that they take the kingdom means the beasts temporarily possessed**

*children, whom thou mayest make **princes in all the earth**”* (Psa 45:16).

- ▣ *“Thy people also shall be all righteous: **they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified**”* (Isa 60:21).
- ▣ *“Blessed are the meek: for **they shall inherit the earth**”* (Mat 5:5).
- ▣ *“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world**”* (Mat 25:34).
- ▣ *“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to **give you the kingdom**”* (Luke 12:32).
- ▣ *“For the promise, that he should be the **heir of the world**, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of*

faith. For if they which are of the law be **heirs**, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect" (Rom 4:13-14).

- ▶ "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: If we suffer, we shall also **reign with Him**: if we deny Him, He also will deny us" (2 Tim 2:11-12).
- ▶ "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and **heirs of the kingdom** which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James 2:5).
- ▶ "And he that overcometh, and

foreheads, or in their hands; and **they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years**" (Rev 20:4).

Avoid Speculation

Because of an enormous amount of theological speculation, all manner of finely tuned theologies have been developed concerning the reign of the saints. Such speculations produce more questions than answers, and tend to turn us from Divine emphases. **Care must be taken not to get caught up in language and views that extend beyond the perimeter of revelation.**

Later in this vision, I will provide a more thorough exposition of this matter. Verses twenty-two and twenty-

when filtered through expressions that are of human origin. While I choose not to sit in judgment upon any person, I must insist that no dignity be assigned to any language other than that employed by the Holy Spirit.

A Brief Summation

Suffice it to say, Daniel has seen the Son of man receive the kingdom upon returning to heaven and coming before God. **Now he sees the same kingdom being possessed by the saints of God.** Whatever any person chooses to believe, it must not be allowed to overshadow these basic revelations.

FOREVER

"... for ever, even for ever and ever." Other versions read, "for all ages to come,"^{NASB} "forever – yes, for ever and ever,"^{NIV} "even to the ages of ages."^{DARBY}

The idea here is that the dominion given to the saints will never end – i.e., "world without end" (Eph 3:21). The kingdom given to the Babylonians ended. The kingdom given to the Medes and Persians ended. The kingdom given to the Grecians ended. The kingdom given to the Romans ended. **But the kingdom given to the saints will never end.** Now we have received it by faith (Heb 12:28), but there is a time coming when we will enter into the fulness of our inheritance.

It is in this sense that the Spirit speaks of "the world to come" – that is, the "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet 3:13). There – in "the world to come" – eternal life will be experienced in its fulness (Mk 10:30). That is the "world" that is the subject of Apostolic elaboration (Heb 2:5). The "prize" for which we run (1 Cor 9:24), and toward which we "press" (Phil 3:14), is related to "the world to come," when the saints will "take the kingdom," possessing their "eternal inheritance" (Heb 9:15). It is then that they will judge the world and angels (1 Cor 6:2-3). It is then that they will inherit the earth, enter fully into life, and be given authority "over the nations" (Rev 2:26). **Daniel saw this over 2,600 years ago!** What a marvelous revelation of the closeness of this prophet to the heart of the God of heaven!

I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THE TRUTH OF GOD CAN BE BETTER UNDERSTOOD WHEN FILTERED THROUGH EXPRESSIONS THAT ARE OF HUMAN ORIGIN. WHILE I CHOOSE NOT TO SIT IN JUDGMENT UPON ANY PERSON, I MUST INSIST THAT NO DIGNITY BE ASSIGNED TO ANY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN THAT EMPLOYED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give **power over the nations**: And **he shall rule them with a rod of iron**; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev 2:26-27).

- ▶ "To him that overcometh will I grant to **sit with Me in my throne**, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev 3:21).
- ▶ "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and **we shall reign on the earth**" (Rev 5:10).
- ▶ "And I saw **thrones**, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their

seven also touch upon this subject, and will provide the basis for more extensive remarks. At this point, however, I do want to draw attention to some phrases that are NOT found in any version of Scripture. Yet, they are quite prominent in some views of the kingdom of God: "The millennium," "the thousand year reign of Christ," "the thousand year reign," and "thousand year reign." **No standard translation contains any of these phrases.** Never do the Scriptures affirm Christ will reign a thousand years. Rather, they say "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus" will reign "with" Him for a thousand years (Rev 20:4). Never do they say Christ will "reign on the earth" Rather, they declare those who have been made "kings and priests" unto God will "reign on the earth" (Rev 5:10).

For this reason, in delineating this passage, I have chosen to confine myself to words "which the Holy Spirit teaches" (1 Cor 2:13). I find it difficult to believe the truth of God can be better understood

THE DISTURBING PART OF THE VISION

“¹⁹ Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;²⁰ And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.”

We will now see that insight into eternity does not remove inquiry into time. **Truth never makes men indifferent to the encroachment of the enemy.** The knowledge of God never gives birth to indifference or a casual attitude toward iniquity. Thus Daniel, even after hearing of the saints taking the kingdom, is repulsed by the very appearance of the pitiless and dominating fourth beast. He will inquire into this matter further, with a particular interest in the strange “*little horn*” he has seen.

Inquiring Into the Truth

Here, it is in order to say something about the attitude of men toward the truth of God. Honest and good hearts inquire into the truth, seeking to comprehend it more fully. A heart in which faith resides is not content to remain ignorant of the truth of God. It wants to see more clearly and understand more fully. Thus David prayed, “*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law*” (Psa 119:18). In Apostolic language, this is receiving “*the love of the truth.*”

Even though it may appear quite harsh, the Spirit makes clear that **it is**

not possible to be saved without the appetite and preference for the truth. How strongly the case is stated. The one whose coming is “*after the working of Satan*” is said to be successful in deceiving those who are perishing “*because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.* And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: **that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness**” (2 Thess 2:10-12). Who can fail to see the importance of an appetite for the truth of God. **Should men refuse to receive a love for the truth, it is not possible to avoid being damned – condemned by God!**

When God made His mind known to the people of Israel, they did not inquire into that revelation with eagerness and consistency. The Lord noted their reluctance and said, “*I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing*” (Hosea 8:12). Of the wicked God said, “*Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee*” (Psa 50:17). **God does take note of the attitude of people toward His truth.**

If there is one disturbing thing in the modern church, it is its lack of love for the truth of God. It is not unpopular to see *church people* more interested in social activities than God’s truth. **The level of ignorance concerning the Word of God that prevails in the average congregation and individual Christian attests to the absence of a love for the truth.**

You will find no such absence in Daniel. He was restless when he could not

understand, and took aggressive measures to see and comprehend more. In this regard, he was reflecting the nature of people who have faith.

THE FOURTH BEAST

“Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet . . .”



The casual person would have been content with what had already been revealed about this fourth beast. However, it was different – “*diverse from all the others.*” It was not only dreadful, but “*exceeding dreadful.*” Its teeth were not normal, but were made of “**iron.**” Its nails, or claws, were not conventional, but were “**nails of brass.**” It did not merely overcome those it opposed, but “*ate its victims, crushed them, and trampled their remains underfoot.*”^{NJB}

Remember, this is a vision given to Daniel by God. It is not an interpretation, but a revelation of the nature of the fourth king and kingdom. Daniel sensed there was more to be known about this beast, and pressed in to obtain more insight. How is it that such violence took place, and what did it all mean?

THE TEN HORNS

“ . . . And of the ten horns that were in his head . . .” And what about those ten horns upon the head of this beast? No other beast was so described. Further, as with the iron teeth and brass claws, there was no parallel of this gross creature in nature. **This kingdom was to other kingdoms what the fourth beast was to the creation – a gross distortion.**

Note, Daniel does not try and figure out the meaning of “*ten horns,*” or attempt to compare it to some other

SHOULD MEN REFUSE TO RECEIVE A LOVE FOR THE TRUTH, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO AVOID BEING DAMNED – CONDEMNED BY GOD!

likeness with which he was familiar. Instead, he gives his *“heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven”* (Eccl 1:13). To an even further degree than Solomon, Daniel knew, *“Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God”* (Prov 2:5).

Note also the object of Daniel’s inquiry. He is not asking for guidance in the fulfillment of duty, but for an understanding of what God has revealed to him. Those who engage in such a pursuit will see duty with more clarity.

THE OTHER WHICH CAME UP

“. . . and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.”

Daniel’s attention has been arrested by the unusual phenomenon of the *“little horn.”* Already he has pondered the vision and seen something. In the vision Daniel saw *“another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots.”* Now he perceives the three horns were not removed prior to the rise of the *“little horn.”* Rather, they were actually violently displaced by the *“little horn.”* The three other horns *“fell”* before it, making room for the *“little horn.”* Other versions read, *“the other which came up, causing the fall of three,”*^{BEB} *“and the other that came up, and rooted up some of the former,”*^{Septuagint} *“the little horn that came up afterward and destroyed three of the other horns,”*^{NLT} and *“the other horn, which came up and to make room for which three of them fell out.”*^{NRS}

Behold how the violence continues. Not only did the fourth beast devour and its victims, stamping into dust what fell from between his iron teeth, but the rise of the *“little horn”* is also attended by violence. Three of the ten horns are uprooted, fall, plucked up by the



roots, and destroyed. This is verily a kingdom that *“takes the sword,”* or lives by violence (Matt 26:52; Rev 13:10).

An Intelligent but Aggressive Horn

When Daniel saw the vision, this little horn was seen as *“having eyes LIKE a man”* (7:8). Now Daniel refers to this horn as one *“that had eyes,”* or was noted for intelligence and shrewdness. However, Daniel has already seen something more in this *“little horn.”* In the vision this horn was seen to have *“a mouth speaking great things.”* Now Daniel has seen he had a *“mouth that spake VERY great things.”* Its boasting and brashness went even further than those before it.

More Impressive

One additional thing is noted that reveals how Daniel had deeply pondered what he had seen. He said the horn was *“more stout than his fellows.”* Other versions read, *“whose appearance was greater than his fellows,”*^{NKJV} *“which was larger in appearance than its associates,”*^{NASB} *“looked more imposing than the others,”*^{NIV} *“seemed greater than the others,”*^{NRSV} *“his look was bolder than the rest,”*^{Septuagint} *“looked more impressive than its fellows,”*^{NJB} and *“more conspicuous than its fellows.”*^{TNK}

Although the fourth beast was itself quite impressive, and although the ten horns were most unusual, yet this *“little horn”* seemed to be superior. It was actually more imposing than the surrounding horns – which means it did not remain *“little.”* In fact, it took up the space of three former horns.

It was obvious to Daniel that this was no ordinary vision. He was being shown things most significant – things concerning which more could be known. Therefore, he pressed forward to obtain that knowledge.

A Word Concerning the Ordinary

Right here, a word concerning *“the ordinary”* is in order. It is possible to become so riveted to the ordinary, common, customary, and familiar, that the soul goes to sleep. **Confined to the “normal,” spiritual growth and increase is highly unlikely, if not impossible.** It is always safe to assume that, at the very best, we have only

THE OPINION THAT THE “LITTLEHORN” IS ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES

Antiochus IV (175-164 B. C.), surnamed Epiphanes (God manifest) but called by his enemies Epimanes (madman). Antiochus IV was one of the cruelest rulers of all time. Like his father, Antiochus III the Great, he was enterprising and ambitious; however, he had a tendency to cruelty that bordered on madness. His primary aim – to unify his empire by spreading Greek civilization and culture – brought him into direct conflict with the Jews. This conflict broke into open rebellion in 167 B. C. Accounts of these conflicts are found in the apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees.

The revolt began with Antiochus’ edict that sought to unite all the peoples of his kingdom in religion, law, and custom. The Jews were the only people who would not adhere to this edict. Antiochus issued regulations against observing the Sabbath, practicing circumcision, and keeping all food laws. These regulations were followed by the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION (Dan 11:31) – the erection of the altar of the Greek god Zeus over the altar of the burnt offering in the Temple. Jews were forced to participate in heathen festivities and were put to death if they were caught with the Book of the Law in their possession.

As the revolt, led by Judas Maccabeus, gained momentum, the people of Israel united to overthrow Seleucid domination of their land. The Syrians were routed and the Temple was cleansed on the 25th of Chislev, 165 B. C. This cleansing is now observed by the Jews as the Feast of Lights (Hanukkah), around December 25. According to ancient writers, Antiochus IV withdrew into the East following his defeat. He died in Persia a madman. Some scholars see the *“little horn”* of (Daniel 8:9) as a reference to Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

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Figure 1

touched the hem of the garment of truth. Take, for example, the case of Daniel. Even though he was granted to see an extended and most remarkable vision, yet there was more to be comprehended than what he had seen. **However, that additional insight had to be pursued.** It did not simply fall into Daniel’s lap while he was occupied with lesser things.

There are *“things which are above”* – things that are *“where Christ*

sitteth on the right hand of God.” These are “*things*” God intends for us to have, are made accessible in Christ Jesus. The Scriptures speak of them, and the heart senses them. Yet, they must be sought – pursued with a relentless spirit (Col 3:1). Believers are to “*set,*” or place, their “*affection on things above, not on things on the earth*” (Col 3:2). New life in Christ is peculiarly adapted for this quest. As it is written, “*For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God*” (Col 3:3).

Thus, we have been suited for this pursuit in Christ Jesus, losing our identity with the world and gaining it in Christ Jesus. The “*things*” already exist, and are for us. However, they are “*in heaven,*” and not on the earth. Therefore, if we do not obtain an appetite for them, and engage in a fervent quest for them,

we simply will not have them.

When we confront impoverished souls – particularly ones who have long worn the name of Christ – a most serious condition is unveiled. **Those who do not have the things for which new life in Christ Jesus has adapted them, simply have not sought after them.** They have not developed an appetite for them, and therefore they remain in a sort of spiritual fog. I do not speak of novices, or new converts – although in our day, they generally outshine the long-term believers in seeking for things above.

At the time of our text, Daniel is an old man, according to fleshly assessment. But his spirit, or inner man, is not old. He still probes for the truth and inquires after a more thorough

understanding. You do well to emulate him, and not the indifferent religious multitudes all about you. When Jesus said “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you,*” it was more than the recitation of an option at your disposal (Mat 6:33). Participation in God’s kingdom and the appropriation of His righteousness **cannot** be realized apart from seeking them – i.e., seeking them “*first,*” or as matters of priority.

If you choose to energetically pursue the things of God, you will find yourself in sharp conflict with the *Christian world*. But you must pursue them anyway, pushing beyond the narrow borders of conventional *Christianity*. Dare to be like Daniel! Dare to pursue the truth with consistency and zeal!

A TEMPORARY TRIUMPH

“*21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.*”

We know from what follows that God did not intend for Daniel to remain ignorant of these things. It is ever true, “*The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever*” (Deu 29:29). Daniel has sensed this truth in his heart, as well as known it in his mind. It is true that he was no doubt compelled by godly curiosity. Yet there is more to this account than that. The prophet also knew the nature of God to a measurable degree, and perceived there was more to be known. Thus he pressed in closer to know the mind of the Lord.

I BEHELD – THE VISION CONTINUES

“*I beheld . . .*” It is apparent that Daniel was expectant. Notice, he has asked a question of one of the angels that stood by, and yet the angel has not yet answered him. He first asked “*the truth of all of this,*” and was told that the four beasts are four kings that will rise out of the earth. Notwithstanding, the saints – not the beasts, or kings of the earth – will ultimately take the kingdom. Now Daniel pursues further understanding of the fourth beast in general, and the “*little horn*” in particular. While he waited for the answer, he “*kept looking,*”^{NKJV} at the vision, sensing there was more to come. And, indeed, he was given to see even more before further explanations were

given to him.

A Principle

There is a principle in this text that speaks to us about the process of spiritual learning. While we wait for illumination, we must continue to peer into what has been revealed. This was not only true for Daniel during the time of the First Covenant, but for us as well who are living under the greater light of the New Covenant. Peter put it this way: “*We have also a more sure word of prophecy* (more fully confirmed^{NRSV}); *whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts*” (2 Pet 1:19). **Many poor souls have deprived themselves of precious understanding simply because they did not look long enough and intently enough into the Word of the Lord.** They expose themselves too briefly to the Word, and thus never really get the blessing of understanding.

This is one of the strongest arguments against brevity and generalization – two enemies of good understanding. Some people are exposed to enough of God’s Word to come away

IF MEN DO NOT GROW DEEP INTO THE WORD, SIN WILL BECOME MORE DEEPLY ROOTED IN THEM. YOU SIMPLY CANNOT ADVANCE IN THE FAITH WHILE ALLOWING YOUR ATTENTION TO DART HERE AND THERE, NEVER DWELLING FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME UPON WHAT THE LORD HAS REVEALED.

empty, all the while thinking they have somehow taken hold of the truth. Those miserable teachers who speak so briefly on the things of God, even then remaining on the glassy surface of the truth, have actually hurt the people whom they are supposedly feeding.

If men do not grow deep into the Word, sin will become more deeply rooted in them. You simply cannot advance in the faith while allowing your attention to dart here and there, never dwelling for any length of time upon what the Lord has revealed.

Thus Daniel continues to look, and as he does, he sees something that precious few souls have ever seen – even to this very day.

MADE WAR WITH THE SAINTS

“... and the same horn made war with the saints...” Other versions declare that activity was in the process of occurring: “and the same horn was making war against the saints,”^{NKJV} “that horn was waging war with the saints,”^{NASB} and “is making war with the saints.”^{YLT}

The language is most arresting! There are some (not a few) who feel this “*little horn*” represents Antiochus Epiphanes, who around B.C. 170 unleashed a most terrible persecution against the Jews. He plundered the Temple, took Jerusalem by ferocious assault, and forcibly imposed the Greek religion upon the Jews (B.C. 167). Figure 1 provides the reasoning for this view.

Are “the Saints” the Jews?

To this point, three notable things are said about “*the saints*.” First, they are “*the saints of the most High*.” Second, that they “*shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever*.” Third, that the “*little horn*” will wage war against them. I suggest that this type of language has never been applied to the Jews without Christ – and that was their condition during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes.

The word “*saints*” is used sparingly in Moses and the Prophets. Moses used the word in reference to the angelic hosts that accompanied the revelation of God at Mount Sinai (Deut

33:2-3). Hannah said the Lord would “*keep the feet of His saints*,” as compared to the silencing of the wicked (1 Sam 2:9). In the dedication of the Temple, Solomon prayed, “*let Thy saints rejoice in goodness*” (2 Chron 6:41). Job referred to the angels as “*His saints*” (Job 15:15). There are twenty references to “*saints*” in the book of Psalms (16:3; 30:4; 31:23; 34:9; 37:28; 50:5; 52:9; 79:2; 85:8; 89:5,7; 97:10; 116:15; 132:9,16; 145:10; 148:14; 149:1,5,9). These passages deal with godly people, and not with the Jews as a whole. A single reference in Proverbs finds the word used the same way – of holy people (Prov 2:8). Daniel uses the term in this way also (Dan 7:18,21,22,25,27). Hosea and Zechariah do the same (Hos 11:12; Zech 14:5).

When it comes to descriptions of

to those who are in Christ Jesus, being used sixty times (Acts 9:13,32,41; 26:10; Rom 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25,26,31; 16:2,15; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:1,2; 14:33; 16:1,15; 2 Cor 1:1; 8:4; 9:1,12; 2 Cor 13:13; Eph 1:1,15,18; 2:19; 3:8,18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18; Phil 1:1; 4:22; Col 1:2,4,12,26; 1 Thess 3:13; 2 Thess 1:10; 1 Tim 5:10; Phile 1:5,7; Heb 6:10; 13:24; Jude 1:3,14; Rev 5:8; 8:3,4; 11:18; 13:7,10; 14:12; 15:3; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:8; 20:9). These are the saints to whom Daniel’s vision refers – the ones against whom the “*little horn*” wages war.

Also, this whole matter is introduced against the backdrop of the exaltation of the “*Son of man*,” which puts the events of reference after Jesus died, rose again, ascended to heaven, and was enthroned at the Father’s right hand with “*all power in heaven and in earth*”

IN BOTH DANIEL AND REVELATION WE SEE THE SHARP CONFLICT THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE SAINTS AND THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD. THEY ARE OF ANOTHER ORDER, AND THE WORLD SENSES IT.

the Jewish nation as a whole, Moses said, “*thou art a stiffnecked people*” (Deut 9:6). “*From the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD*” (Deu 9:7). “*Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you*” (Deu 9:24). God Himself said of the nation, “*But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people*” (Rom 10:21).

“*Saints*” was never used of the Jewish nation as a whole. They were a holy people by Divine choice, not because of their godliness (Deut 7:6; 14:2,21; 26:19). There were, to be sure, a remnant of holy people among them. The prophets did foresee a time when they would be holy (Isa 62:12), which was a view of them in Christ, or as the “*redeemed of the Lord*.”

Within the New Covenant, however, “*saints*” is a standard reference

(Matt 28:18).

Parallel to John’s Revelation

The words of our text parallel the revelation given to John on Patmos. He also saw a beast that wages war against God’s witnesses (Rev 11:7). Satan himself is depicted as a “*dragon*” that “*went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*” (Rev 12:17). Another beast is also “*given to make war with the saints*” (Rev 13:7).

In both Daniel and Revelation we see the sharp conflict that exists between the saints and the kingdoms of this world. They are of another order, and the world senses it. That conflict is brought to its apex in a particular ruler and kingdom – one which sprang out of the fourth beastly kingdom, which was Rome.

Because this is developed more fully in the succeeding verses, I will only

make a few cursory remarks here.

First, the worst of all powers are those who openly come against the people of God. Whether it takes the form of bloody persecution, or outlawing public prayer and forcing the children of the saints to be subjected to the theory of evolution, the justification of sodomy, and other forms of debauchery and corruption, it is the same: a war against the saints.

We will find this power is a religious power – one that operates on the same principles as the governments of this world. The “*little horn*” is a religious power that fiercely and openly opposes the people of God.

PREVAILED AGAINST THEM

“... and prevailed against them.”

Other versions show how Daniel saw the battle raging, and the triumph passing to the “*little horn*.” “... and prevailing

Not the Moment

There is a kingdom principle to be noted here. First, **an institutional emphasis will not allow us to read the words of Daniel with profit.** They run counter to what religious men consider to be success. In fact, a considerable percentage of Western *Christianity* is tailored to reduce any friction between it and the world. It appears as though this is working well, but it has certainly not resulted in any fruit toward God (Rom 7:4).

In our text, the saints are overcome – yet they eventually will “*take the kingdom*.” Their defeat, therefore, is not what it appears to be. Let it clear the saints are not overcome by being compelled to sin. They are not caused to fail morally or spiritually.

It is God’s manner to allow His people to be at a great disadvantage before He exalts them. In this way He

bow to him (Gen 37:5-10). However, in the intervening years Joseph was overcome. His brothers overpowered him, threw him into a pit, and sold him to a band of Ishmaelites (Gen 37:28). He was then sold to an Egyptian named Potiphar, and through the lies of his wife, Joseph ended up in prison (Gen 37:36; 39:20). But then, Joseph took the kingdom, so to speak, and was seated upon the throne of Egypt (Gen 41:41-43).

- ▣ **Israel.** As the offspring of Abraham, the promises of God belonged to Israel. Yet, when they were few in number, and because of a fierce famine, they had to go down into Egypt. There, in a foreign land, they were overcome, and forced to serve “*with rigor*” (Ex 1:13-14). Yet, in due time, they took the kingdom, so to speak, coming out of Egypt with high hand, and seeing the destruction of their enemies (Ex 14:8; 15:30).

- ▣ **The Lord Jesus.** The Lord Jesus, Lord of glory, came into the world to “*save sinners*” (1 Tim 1:15). While in the world, He was overcome, “*crucified through weakness*” (2 Cor 13:4), “*made to be sin*” (2 Cor 5:21), and “*made a curse*” (Gal 3:13). Yet Jesus took the kingdom, destroying the devil, plundering principalities and powers, and conquering death (Heb 2:14; Col 2:15; Acts 2:24).

- ▣ **The Gentiles.** Although the promise of blessing was extended to the whole world and every nation (Gen 12:3), the Gentiles were overcome. Sin ravaged them until, as a whole, they became reprehensible (Rom 1:21-32). They were “*not a people*,” and did not “*obtain mercy*” (1 Pet 2:10). Yet, in due time they took the kingdom, becoming “*fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God*” (Eph 2:19). Many of them are “*now the people of God*” and have “*obtained mercy*.”

- ▣ **The two witnesses.** The book of Revelation speaks of two witnesses who speak for God. The beast from the bottomless pit makes war against them, overcomes them, and kills them. Their dead bodies lie in open

IT IS GOD’S MANNER TO ALLOW HIS PEOPLE TO BE AT A GREAT DISADVANTAGE BEFORE HE EXALTS THEM. IN THIS WAY HE GAUINS THE GREATER GLORY.

against them,”^{NKJV} “and overpowering them,”^{NASB} “and defeating them,”^{NIV} “proving the stronger,”^{NJB} and “and overcame them.”^{TNK}

Later Daniel says this power will “*wear out the saints*” (8:25). Daniel 12:7 speaks of the scattering of “*holy people*.” Revelation 13:7 speaks of a power to whom it was “*given*” to “*make war with the saints and to overcome them*.” The seventeenth chapter of Revelation shows a women “*drunk with the blood of the saints*” (17:6). This, then, is no strange truth! Again, an extensive elaboration of these things is found in the verses that follow.

The Point Is the Ultimate Outcome,

gains the greater glory. This is seen in a number of instances.

- ▣ **Abraham and Sarah.** After the Lord promised a primary seed through Abraham, and that many nations would spring from him, it appeared as though he and his wife had been defeated. His wife was old and barren, and Abraham was old and his body “*as good as dead*” reproductively (Rom 4:18-20; Heb 11:12). It was then that the promise was fulfilled, and Abraham took the kingdom, so to speak.

- ▣ **Joseph.** When he was young, God revealed to Joseph in dreams that he would be dominant, and others would

shame in the street for three and a half days. But then they take the kingdom, so to speak, as they stand upon their feet. Great fear comes upon their enemies, and they ascend up into heaven in a cloud while their enemies watch (Rev 11:3-11).

- ▣ **The saints.** The people of God are the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13-14). Yet, they are overcome, being accounted *“the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things”* (1 Cor 4:13). Daniel sees them overcome. John sees them overcome. The greatest among them suffer as martyrs as they are *“killed all the day long”* (Rom 8:36). Yet, in our text, they take the kingdom, and the glory and greatness of that great kingdom is given to them.

THEY ARE OVERCOME BY THE “LITTLE HORN” – BUT NOT ULTIMATELY! IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, IT IS THE “LITTLE HORN” THAT WILL FAIL, AND THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH WHO WILL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER!

This is the manner of the Kingdom! This is how God brings glory to His great name! He brings them through the Red Sea, delivers them from fiery furnaces, and causes them to overcome the lion’s den. This is how God works, and it ought not surprise us when

Daniel sees the Lord doing precisely this with His saints. They are overcome by the *“little horn”* – but not ultimately! **In the final analysis, it is the “little horn” that will fail, and the saints of the most High who will reign for ever and ever!**

CONCLUSION

The insights given to Daniel are intended for you! What he was granted to see pertains to all those who are in Christ Jesus. Daniel was given to see that in the world, we ought not expect recognition and honor. But this world is not all there is. There is a world to come, and the saints of God will be in charge of it, reigning with Jesus. In Christ, there is a reign in your future!

We must not allow ourselves to be spiritually naive about our tenure in this world. If the world hates us, we ought not marvel (1 John 3:13). If some of our brethren are overcome, suffer martyrdom, or appear to be *“the tail,”* it should not cause us to stagger. **The battle is not over yet!** It is still true, *“And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou*

shalt not be beneath” (Deu 28:13). The Lord will *“bruise Satan under your feet shortly”* (Rom 16:20). Be strong! Have faith in God and *“hope to the end”* (1 Pet 1:13). Good things are ahead for all who keep the faith.

In the meantime, God is able to *“keep you from falling and present you faultless before His presence”* (Jude 24).

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 11/15/2002. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, reviewing verses 22-28 of the seventh chapter. The interpretation of the visions continues, with an accent upon the fourth beast, and particularly emphasizing the little horn that sprang from it. Daniel is told the saints will be worn out by this despot. Yet the kingdom God set up, in all of its glory and greatness, will be given to them. The explanations of the visions have a profound effect upon Daniel, and he retains the matter in his heart. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

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COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>

COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>

Remember!

The Refreshing Waters Renewal

7/29 - 7/31, 2003

Theme: "The Grace of God"

**Brother Lawrence Jimoh, our partner in West Africa
is planning to be with us in Mid-December, 2002
He will give us an update on the translation work.**